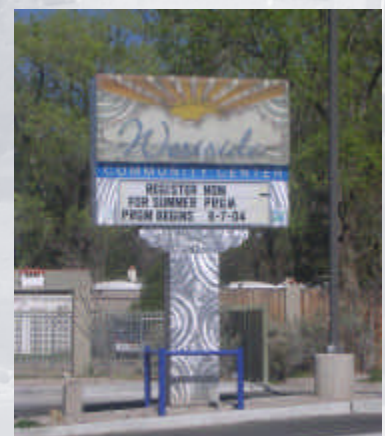


# The Walkable Community Workshop Report

March 29-April 2, 2004

The  
National Center  
for Bicycling and  
Walking  
and  
MRCOG



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## Workshop Report **The Walkable Community**



**2004 Walkable Community Workshop  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
March 29 - April 2, 2004**

**Sponsored by the National Center for Bicycling and Walking  
and the Mid-Region Council of Governments**

### **Participating Agencies & Community Groups**

Bernalillo County Public Works Department  
Bernalillo County Parks & Recreation Department  
City of Albuquerque Transportation Division/ DMD  
City of Rio Rancho Public Works Department  
Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque  
City of Belen  
New Mexico Department of Transportation  
WALK Albuquerque

**Mid-Region Council of Governments  
Lawrence Rael, Executive Director**

### **Contributing Staff:**

Rodolfo Monge Oviedo, Transportation Planner

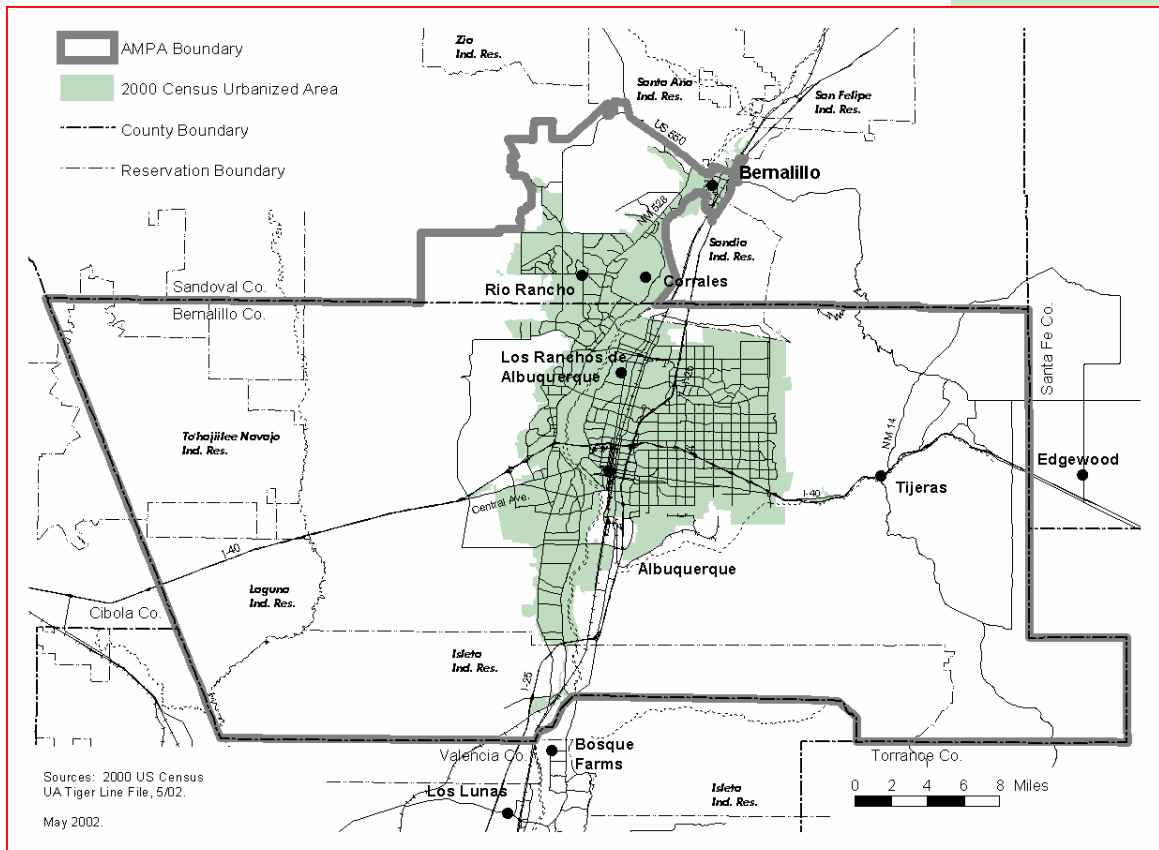
The Walkable Community Workshop series was made possible in part by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and was endorsed by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO).

## The Walkable Community Workshop Report

### Background

In June 2003 the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW) issued a call for proposals to host a series of eight Walkable Community Workshops (WCW). The call was open nationwide to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). This was a “shared-cost” project in which the NCBW would provide up to \$20,000 in technical assistance and the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) would provide a match of \$8,000. MRCOG would then work in partnership with several hosting local communities in implementing the workshops.

The MRCOG was one of twelve MPOs selected to participate in the 2004 Walkable Community Workshop (WCW) program.<sup>1</sup> The program has concentrated on identifying real world problems and hands-on solutions for each community. Using examples of success and failure in other communities in the nation, participants assess the elements of a “walkable community”.



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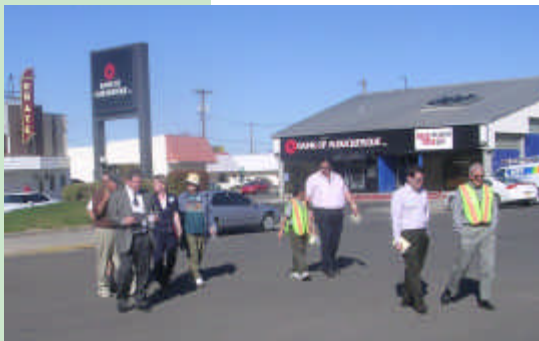
## Workshop Report **The Walkable Community**

An interpretative walking exercise called “pedestrian audit” took place in a predetermined study area. This tour was important because it provided participants with a realistic pedestrian perspective. The goal was to bring together elected officials, public agencies, public health practitioners, planners, residents, and engineers to focus attention on making communities more pedestrian friendly.

The coordination effort between MRCOG and the hosting communities included the identification of the workshop’s theme, the study site where the walk audit was taking place, and the advertising of the event within other major logistic actions. The approach used in the workshops was originally developed and pilot-tested by the FHWA in cooperation with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) in 2000/2001. The WCW concept was based on prior work by the MCBW, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) between 1995 and 2000 on the Pedestrian Safety Road Show curriculum.

The active participation and contribution of the local communities was fundamental to the success of this event.

The following eight Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were selected: Birmingham, AL; Metropolitan Washington, DC; St. Paul, MN; Albuquerque, NM; Cincinnati, OH; Dayton, OH; Providence, RI; and San Antonio, TX. In addition, two series of workshops will be hosted in shared arrangements by an additional four MPOs: the Louisville/Lexington, KY, MPOs and the MPOs in Eugene, OR, and Vancouver, WA.



**Belen (above) and Rio Rancho (right) were two communities sponsoring workshops**





## The Workshops

The eight WCW series were scheduled during the week of March 29 through April 2, 2004.

The Walkable Community Workshops were four hour events for elected officials, citizens, and professionals in the fields of planning, engineering, law enforcement and education. They provided information on how to make our communities the pedestrian-friendly places we all like to have. The trainers were experienced professionals and practitioners from diverse backgrounds and fields of work, including planning, transportation engineering, public health, pedestrian policy, and program development. Trainers and participants together identified opportunities to make our community more walkable.

MRCOG staff implemented these events in close coordination with the local coordinator from each of the government agencies and community groups hosting a workshop. The participation of the local coordinator was critical to the success of the event. These individuals provided necessary leadership. They selected conference rooms, defined the focus of the workshop, identified study sites, built local media relations, clarified workshop logistics, and contacted and engaged important stakeholders of the community.



**Workshop 1**  
**March 29**  
City of Belen  
Council Chambers  
"Becker Avenue:  
Enhancing Downtown"  
1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Workshop 2**  
**March 30,**  
Village of Los Ranchos  
North Valley Sheriff  
Substation  
"4<sup>th</sup> Street Phase II"  
8:00-12:00 noon.

**Workshop 3**  
**March 30**  
North Valley  
Raymond Sanchez  
Community Center  
"Alameda Blvd/4<sup>th</sup> Street Area"  
1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Workshop 4**  
**March 31**  
Walk Albuquerque  
Family Focus Center,  
Zia Elementary School  
"Safe Access to Schools"  
8:00-12:00 noon.

**Workshop 5**  
**March 31**  
City of Albuquerque  
Erma Ferguson Library  
Meeting Room  
"Mid-block Crossings"  
1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Workshop 6**  
**April 1**  
City of Rio Rancho  
Star Heights Park &  
Recreation Center  
"Facilities in Neighborhoods"  
8:00-12:00 noon.

**Workshop 7**  
**April 1**  
Bernalillo County  
Paradise Hills Community  
Center "Access to Recreational  
Centers"  
1:00-5:00 p.m.

**Workshop 8**  
**April 2**  
South Valley  
Westside Community Center  
"Coors Blvd. /Arenal Rd.  
Area"  
8:00-12:00 a.m.



### Workshop Schedule and Locations

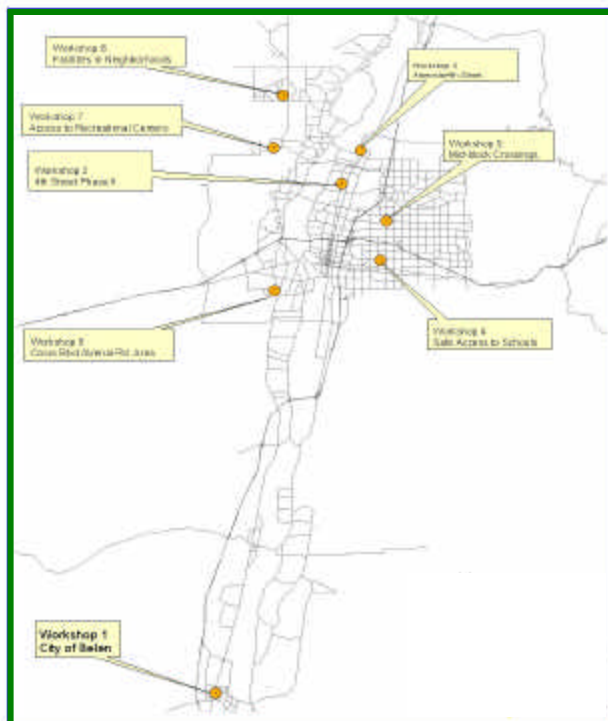
## Workshop Report    The Walkable Community

Participating agencies and community groups were: Bernalillo County Public Works Department and Bernalillo County Parks & Recreation Department; City of Albuquerque Transportation Division/DMD; City of Rio Rancho Public Works Department; Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque; City of Belen; New Mexico Department of Transportation- District 3; and WALK Albuquerque.

The NCBW provided two experienced trainers in different areas of planning, design, engineering, and health. Peter Lagerwey and Billy Jack were the trainers that worked closely with MRCOG's staff in implementing the program and curriculum that responded to the needs and expectation of our community.

Peter Lagerwey has been the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the City of Seattle for almost 20 years. Seattle has received national recognition for being one of the best walking and bicycling cities in the United States. Peter has taught courses in urban design in over 200 cities over the past 15 years.

Billy Jack has over 30 years of experience working for the City of Seattle. He has experience in all aspects of planning, engineering design and construction of pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Most recently, Billy helped teach a three day course to participants from all across America on how to plan, design and implement improvements to create a more livable community.



In addition, a summary presentation of the WCW program was given to the MRCOG Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) which includes department directors and managers from different transportation and planning agencies of all local governments and some special purpose groups in the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning area.

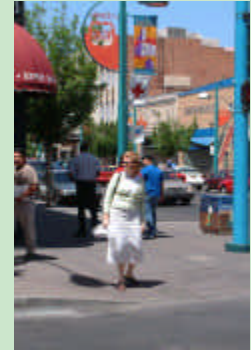
**Workshops were held across the region.**

## The Participants

One hundred and six people attended the workshops. This number was taken from actual sign-in sheets collected at the time of the workshops. Some people who participated in the workshops such as late arrivals, etc. might not be represented in this figure. In addition, approximately 50 people attending the TCC meeting on April 2, 2004 were able to hear a 25 minutes presentation by the WCW.

Participants in the workshops included: community residents, elected officials, community leaders, engineers, government officials, law enforcement, fire department, planners, private consultants, urban designers, pedestrian and bicycling advocates, business owners, health officials, university professionals, teachers, and local, regional and State government staff. The sizes of the workshops varied from community to community as well as the conditions and logistics of the workshop, the day, the time of the day, and the weather. However, all of the workshops had key stakeholders' active participation and involvement.

The pedestrian audit was considered by many participants to be the most useful part of the workshop. The audit and break-out groups provided opportunities for participants to team up and to deliver group presentations about their vision. This exercise gave an opportunity to participants to see their community from a pedestrian point of view and to visualize potential improvements.



**Elected officials, key stakeholders and local government staff worked together in the field at Belen (left) and Zia Elementary (above) in Albuquerque to identify solutions.**

## Workshop Report **The Walkable Community**



The workshops became a forum that facilitated communication and collaboration between participants.

The walking exercise was very effective at illustrating the challenges that people face when pedestrian facilities are not available.



Weather conditions can make it even more difficult for pedestrians to reach their destination safely.



Participants draw ideas for pedestrian improvements in their community.



Good design and an inviting environment provide good options for people to enjoy their community .





### Participant Feedback

The WCW became an important forum for engaging local stakeholders in the process of making a difference toward a more walkable community. The message, the format, and the curriculum responded to the needs and expectation of the participants as indicated by the very positive comments received.

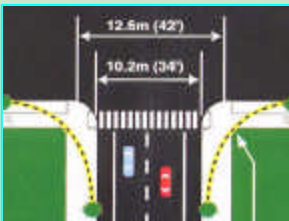
In general, 80.4% of the participants considered the slide presentation to be excellent while 17.8% considered it good. An important part of the workshop was the walking audit. 44.5% considered the audit excellent and 51.8% considered it good. The discussion of possible local strategies and next steps was considered by 43.8% of the participants as excellent and 50.9% good. 58.9% of the participants considered the workshop to be excellent and 41.1% considered it good. Their assessment of how useful they thought the workshop was or will be to their community was 55.3% excellent, 37.5% good, 5.3% fair, and 1.9% poor.

Elements determined to be the **most useful part of the workshop** were identified on the evaluation forms. These included:

- Discussion and examples of good systems
- Slide presentation and photos
- Walking into the community
- Ideas, brainstorming
- Changing mind set, being creative
- Identification of positive and negative features
- Getting people in the community to think about their city and how they want to use it
- Walking audit
- Getting this diverse group together to see, hear, and plan
- The power point helped us to identify with the area and see how we need to correct things and how we want them
- Watching the discussion among participants and the synergy of ideas
- Bringing different groups together to trouble shoot barriers to engineering and so on
- The walking audit may benefit the local community
- Instructor knowledge, perspective
- Talk about strategies for implementation
- Technical details on crossings, road diets, land use
- Discussion while walking and workshop leaders
- Lots of visuals, excellent examples, concise and clear presentation



## Workshop Report **The Walkable Community**



Participants made the following **observations and comments** on the workshop and the **needs in our community**:

- Short term plans and visuals to show to the public – changes for improvement
- Generate community action, enthusiasm, and participation
- Keep moving
- Paint crosswalks, etc.
- A community to see this happen
- Planning for dollars
- More creative financing and ways to pay for these projects
- That the whole concept that was mentioned be achieved
- Paint, money
- Paint the existing walkways and crossways on Becker and create new parking strategies with paint.
- The vision we created become reality.
- A summary report distributed to participants and meeting with Zia Elementary Principal and other APS officials
- A comprehensive list of recommendations for planners and activists
- Broader participation
- Follow up by MRCOG
- Report to City and APS representation that can do something about it
- Keep network of attendees connected
- Write up action plan and implement
- This should be a repeated exercise - maybe every other year to promote it in the community.
- Interaction between participants
- Improvement of 4<sup>th</sup> St. and a trails plan
- Workshop specifically for government elected officials and business owners
- We need to replicate this activity for every school
- Perform an origin and destination study for all students to determine safe walking/biking routes and priorities for physical improvements. Re-evaluate on a yearly basis.
- Distribute safe routes maps and rules to parents with registration packet.
- Follow design principles for pedestrian/biking environments
- Assess key areas in Albuquerque for easy “fixes”, implement them and encourage safe walking and biking.
- More implementation strategies
- Need way to educate local designers
- Need to continue spreading word at policy level and to the public
- How will we get this done?
- Coordinate with County PW department on short term solutions
- Practical site specific recommendations
- Summary of workshop recommendations should be made available

## Next Steps

MRCOG staff is working with the local coordinators to identify next steps that are unique to their community needs for on-going follow-up. Some of the steps identified include technical assistance, training opportunities, and information support. Materials and information already available via the NCBW, FHWA, ITE, and other websites will be provided to the local coordinators.



Staff is also working on developing a new web page within MRCOG's website focusing on bicycle and pedestrian issues and links to other sites. This page will have a photo library of examples of walking strategies from our community as well as from other locales. It will also include slide presentations related to walking issues, a list of pedestrian publications, links to bike and pedestrian organizations and institutions, and information on what is occurring in the region related to bikes and pedestrians issues.

MRCOG will continue pursuing opportunities to bring more technical assistance to the region in partnership with local stakeholders. The experience of bringing the WCW to this region constitutes a step toward achieving a more walkable and physically active community in which MRCOG wants to actively contribute.

When working on addressing walking needs in a community, it is important to have a vision and a strategy on how to implement that vision. It is important to rank identified actions as short, mid, or long-term. Short-term actions need to be simple and of rapid implementation that can produce tangible results. Such strategies contribute to a momentum that keeps mounting. The following are some of the concepts and strategies identified by the participants in the workshops.

- Manage parking (diagonal and parallel)
- Manage speed
- Create pedestrian links
- Inform and educate residents
- Traffic circles and other traffic calming options
- Pedestrian crossing s(ladder form) at intersections
- Bike lanes
- Trail extensions
- Create sidewalks buffers
- Crossing islands for pedestrian and bicyclist that are safe and attractive
- Activated "walk" buttons
- Consider bridges
- Curb ramps that are ADA complaint
- Parking on the street
- Ornamental light posts and other street furniture
- Standardize sidewalks





